

USDA Water Quality Project Begins In Lancaster

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — The Pequea and Mill creeks in Lancaster County are receiving special attention as part of a USDA water quality project.

The 135,000-acre watershed includes the towns of Gap, White Horse, Bird-In-Hand, Intercourse, Strasburg, Quarryville, and Pequea.

Several agencies are developing initiatives as part of this project to improve the water quality in this area. Penn State Cooperative Extension plans to open an office and have an extension agent to develop educational programs in the areas of nutrient management, integrated pest management, and barnyard runoff.

These programs will target the feed, fertilizer, and ag finance industries, as well as farmers. Educational programs will include educational tours, demonstrations, meetings, and individual visits.

Effective, low-cost methods of controlling barnyard runoff and stream management will be demonstrated on local farms. The feed and fertilizer industries will be closely involved in the program to take advantage of their knowledge of fertilizer and pesticide issues.

In addition, programs will also focus on homeowners. Homeowner issues will deal with well construction, wellhead maintenance, septic system maintenance, and the use of household and lawn chemicals.

The Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with ASCS will initially have \$400,000 of cost share money to give to farmers to install conservation practices to improve water quality. SCS hopes to focus the money on water management around barnyards. This will include cost sharing for practices such as terraces around buildings, spouting on barn roofs, stream fencing, and concrete curbs around barnyards.

To get a handle on the amount of pesticide and fertilizer being used in this area, the Lancaster County Conservation District in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has been conducting a pesticide/groundwater

survey in the Pequea and Mill Creek watersheds.

More than 100 farmers have already been surveyed with more than 90 percent participation. In order to be statistically valid, farms were selected at random and an interviewer, paid by the district, is sent to each farm to collect information on the use, storage, and disposal of pesticides, fertilizer, and manure.

Currently, the survey is on hold until farmers get through the busy planting and haymaking time. Later, about 50 more surveys will be taken to complete phase 1, which covers the whole Pequea Mill creek watershed. For phase 2, more detailed information will be collected from smaller wellhead protection areas. Public water supply wells will be chosen and the survey will cover the land areas that contribute to the groundwater recharge of these wells.

The Lancaster Conservation District believes that agriculture should not have to take all the responsibility for the protection of groundwater, so they are requesting that urban areas within the wellhead protection area also be surveyed. This survey will include industrial complexes, homeowners, small businesses, and road departments.

Gerald Heistand, who is in charge of collecting the survey information, said, "Most farmers

are concerned about the quality of their groundwater. If we can show through this survey that certain practices are contaminating a farmer's well, why wouldn't a landowner want to take corrective action? But before anyone suggests that we change farming, it must be shown that there is a pesticide problem here, that a particular sector or business is causing it, and which practices are to blame."

He said that "this can only be done by carrying out a complete survey in the well protection area, and by taking sufficient water samples to test for pesticides."

Heistand said he is pleased with

\$425 For 4-H's Strawberries

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Can you imagine? \$425 for a quart of strawberries?

A quart?

But that's what Clifford A. Firestone, president of Firestone Paper and Supply, paid 10-year-old Stephen Leaman of Lancaster at the Rotary Club's Strawberry Round-up Wednesday.

The strawberries were Earli-glo variety. Thirteen-year-old Joel Leaman, cousin to the champion, won reserve champion, which were sold for \$120 to Bob Patterson, president of Lancaster Rehab and Sports Medicine.

Bidders paid more than \$1,000 for 17 quarts of strawberries at the

cooperation the farming community has given the district. "We realize that it takes time out of a landowner's busy schedule to answer all the questions on the survey. However, accurate information on product use and the way practices are carried out will be important in order that valid conclusions can be drawn."

Personal information collected in this survey will remain confidential. A summary of the results from the entire survey will be made available to all persons who take part in the survey. Any questions concerning this survey can be directed to Gerald Heistand at

(717) 299-5361.

The United States Geological Survey, in a related survey, will be conducting water tests on 200 wells in the area. These water tests will measure nitrates and pesticides. It will cost USGS \$340 to test each well. All cooperating homeowners will receive a free copy of the results of their water tests.

This project is a USDA project designed to last five years. The Pequea Mill Creek project is one of more than 60 water quality projects being conducted nationwide as a part of president Bush's water quality initiative.

auction.

The 4-H's attended a marketing workshop to help them learn to sell their produce prior to the auction.

The following were also purchased at the auction:

STRAWBERRY AUCTION RESULTS & EXHIBITORS

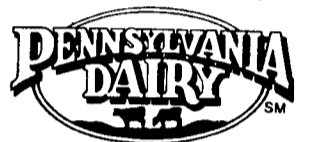
GRAND CHAMPION: Stephen Leaman, Lancaster, PA (Conestoga Valley Club), berries sold for \$425.

RESERVE CHAMPION: Joel Leaman (Conestoga Valley Club), berries sold for \$120.

ADDITIONAL EXHIBITORS: Amy Balmer, Manheim, PA (Elm-Pennyn Club); Kendra Bucher, Manheim, PA (Mastersville Club); Jill Harnish, Christana, PA (Kirkwood Club); Mark Leaman, Lancaster, PA (Conestoga Valley Club); Kandi Mullen, Peach Bottom, PA (Solanco Club); Derek Stoner, Lancaster,

PA (Conestoga Valley Club); Lisa Stoltzfus, Talmage, PA (Conestoga Valley Club).

EXHIBITORS - PROJECT BOOKS: Randy Ebersole, Lancaster, PA (Conestoga Valley Club); Marilyn Holloway, Peach Bottom, PA (Solanco Club); Melissa Holloway, Peach Bottom, PA (Solanco Club); Durrelle Leaman, Lancaster, PA (Conestoga Valley Club); Hans Leaman, Bird-in-Hand, PA (Conestoga Valley Club); James Mullen, Peach Bottom, PA (Solanco Club); Heather Umble, Christana, PA (Kirkwood Club).





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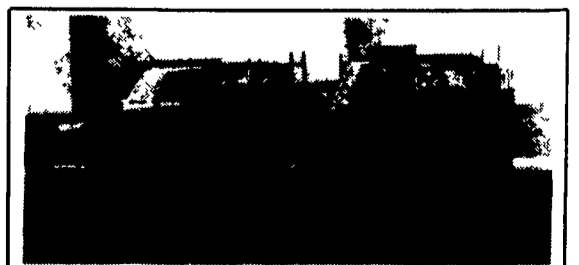
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